

# CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

OCTOBER 10, 2022

## Current Conditions

- The state's new water year began October 1, and with it came fresh concerns about a fourth year of extreme drought. The three-year period from 2020 to 2022 is now the driest on record going back to 1896.
- Hot and dry conditions are expected to continue through November, and the State is taking action to prepare for a fourth dry year.
- To replace and replenish the water that thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere will consume under hotter and drier conditions, Governor Newsom announced "California's Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future" with actions to recycle, de-salt and conserve more water and expand water storage capacity.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of October 10, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 115 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys.

*The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit <https://drought.ca.gov>. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit [www.saveourwater.com](http://www.saveourwater.com).*

## Recent Events and State Actions

### DWR solicits applications for groundwater and drought-relief grants

**(October 10):** DWR announced \$510 million of state funding is now available to help communities, farmers, and groundwater agencies prepare for a fourth dry year of extreme drought conditions.

- \$300 million is available for water infrastructure improvements, yard transformation, and improving water supply reliability.
- \$10.7 million is available for farmers to support water conservation in the Delta and aid migratory birds
- \$200 million in financial assistance for communities that rely on groundwater



### Another \$10.7 million available to reduce Delta water use (October 7):

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, DWR, the Office of the Delta Watermaster, and The Nature Conservancy announced an additional \$10.7 million in grant funding for farmers willing to implement conservation measures that will help protect Delta water quality, promote soil health, and mitigate potential drought impacts on fish and migratory birds. First launched in January, the “Delta Drought Response Pilot Program” enrolled more than 8,700 acres in 2022. The Delta Conservancy will conduct the 2023 program through a reverse auction. Bids can be submitted through the Delta Conservancy’s website and will be accepted through October 18, 2022. The program is offering bonus incentives to participants who provide critical habitat improvements for waterbirds. Participants could receive a bonus of \$75 per acre for short-term shallow flooding or \$40 per acre for providing nesting habitat through delayed harvest.



### Longfin smelt proposed for listing under U.S. Endangered Species Act

**(October 6):** For the next 60 days, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks comments on its proposal to list the San Francisco Bay-Delta distinct population segment of longfin smelt as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service calls habitat loss due to the long-term reduction and alteration of freshwater flows into the San Francisco Bay estuary the primary threat to the species. Bay-Delta longfin smelt are anadromous, meaning older juveniles and adults can migrate to the ocean, but must return to fresh water to spawn. Longfin smelt are currently listed as a threatened species under the California ESA, which prohibits unpermitted possession, purchase, sale or take of listed species. However, the state’s definition of take does not include harm, which under the federal ESA can include destruction of habitat. Listing would require federal agencies to consult with the Service when proposing projects within the species range and would enable the designation of critical habitat under the ESA. Comments on the proposed listing must be received by December 6.



## Recent Events and State Actions

### **California water districts offer to conserve 400,000 acre-feet of Colorado River supplies (October 5):**

In a letter to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Department of the Interior, manager of the biggest Colorado River reservoirs, California water agencies proposed reducing their water usage by 400,000 acre-feet each year beginning in 2023 through 2026 to protect storage in Lake Mead and help stabilize the Colorado River basin. The Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, Palo Verde Irrigation District, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California volunteered to conserve water to help avoid deadpool conditions in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The agencies said they would need to utilize funding opportunities provided by the federal Inflation Reduction Act and other federal programs to enable this voluntary conservation. They also said the voluntary conservation actions were dependent on a clear federal commitment to contribute to efforts to stabilize the Salton Sea, which is receding due to reduced inflows from existing water conservation actions in Imperial Valley and will further shrink as additional water is conserved in the region.



### **Save Our Water partners with Sacramento Republic FC and Sacramento River Cats (ongoing):**

Save Our Water is teaming up with two local athletic teams to promote drought tree care and water conservation. Sacramento Republic FC is releasing a [video](#) of goalkeeper Danny Vitiello sharing tips to maintain trees and limit water use. Additionally, the Sacramento River Cats and the Save Our Water team are sharing water conservation tips at local games.



**Curtailments adjustments (ongoing):** The State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Due to recent weather events, some curtailments in the [Delta watershed](#), and the [Russian River watershed](#). Curtailments remain in effect in the

[Scott River and Shasta River watersheds](#). Curtailments are suspended for the [Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds](#) (sub-watersheds of the Delta) but curtailments in the larger Delta watershed may apply. Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water right holders should closely monitor their email and the [watershed drought webpages](#) for curtailment updates.



## Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.



## Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

**Drought stakeholder briefing:** The secretaries of the Natural Resources Agency, CalEPA, and Department of Food and Agriculture will brief stakeholders **October 12** on the water resilience investments in the 2022-23 budget, recently enacted water legislation, drought response activities, and implementation of the Governor’s Water Supply Strategy.

**Coastal Commission hears desalination project:** On **October 13**, the Coastal Commission will hear South Coast Water District’s application for a coastal development permit for the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project. The project will be in Dana Point and could provide up to five million gallons per day to South Coast Water District and its partner agencies. Underground infrastructure, including slant wells, will be built on a 6-acre campground at Doheny State Beach. Coastal Commission staff have recommended approval of the project, with some conditions.

**DWR hosts drought-to-flood symposium:** DWR will host the “Drought to Flood Symposium: Building Resilience for California's Climate Extremes” at the California Natural Resources Agency headquarters in Sacramento on **October 17**. The state climatologist and experts from academia and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will discuss climate change extremes and how we need to prepare for flooding even during a drought. Registration for the event, in-person or to attend online, can be found [here](#).

## Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: [http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water\\_cond.html](http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html)
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/conservation\\_reporting.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html)
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgma.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://drought.ca.gov/>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>